



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk 860-441-6640  
Town Manager  
860-441-6630

## Meeting Minutes

### Representative Town Meeting

**Moderator Scott L. Newsome, Reps. Karin Adams, Robert Bailey, Jeanne Baker, Joe Baril, Alicia T. Bauer, Rafael Burgos, Jr., Clarence Casper, Bobbie Jo Cini, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Susan Deane-Shinbrot, Jim Evans, Thomas A. Frickman, Bob Garcia, Nancy Gilly, Frederick S. Kent, Matthew G. Longino, Jim Loughlin, Emily Maher, Brandon Marley, Jackie Massett, Lisa McCabe, Bruce A. McDermott, Roscoe L. Merritt, Jim Nault, Kathy Neugent, Lian Obrey, Juliette M. Parker, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Shawn D. Powers, Carolann Quinn, Dutcha Slieker-Hersant, Joan Steinfeld, Irma J. Streeter, James L. Streeter, Archie Swindell, Patricia Wagner, Gary Welles, Ivy R. Williams, and Jonathan Wilson.**

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Wednesday, September 13, 2017

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

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#### REGULAR MEETING

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*Moderator Scott Newsome called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.*

*Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher read the roll call.*

#### A. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Moderator Newsome, Rep. Adams, Rep. Bailey, Rep. Baker, Rep. Baril, Rep. Casper, Rep. Kent, Rep. Cini, Rep. Deane-Shinbrot, Rep. Evans, Rep. Frickman, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Loughlin, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCabe, Rep. McDermott, Rep. Merritt, Rep. Neugent, Rep. Obrey, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Powers, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Streeter, Rep. Slieker-Hersant and Rep. Welles  
Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Burgos, Jr., Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Garcia, Rep. Longino, Rep. Maher, Rep. Marley, Rep. Nault, Rep. Parker, Rep. Quinn, Rep. Swindell, Rep. Wagner, Rep. Williams and Rep. Wilson

*Moderator Newsome stated that 26 members were present and he declared a quorum.*

*Also present were Town Manager John Burt, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, State Representative Christine Conley, Town Mayor Bruce Flax, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Town Clerk Office Assistant II Michael Thorpe.*

#### B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

*The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag.*

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 14, 2017 & AUGUST 9, 2017

*A motion to approve the minutes for June 14, 2017 was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Adams and so voted unanimously.*

*A motion to approve the minutes for August 9, 2017 was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously as amended.*

#### D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

*Jean-Claude Ambroise, 169 Shennecossett Parkway, spoke out against the Charter Revisions proposal to replace the RTM with a Board of Finance. He stated that the RTM has the diversity that is needed for fair representation for all the residents of Groton. He urged RTM members to contact Town Councilors and inform their constituents to reject this proposal.*

#### E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Moderator Newsome stated that Reps. Nault, Parker, Wagner and Wilson notified the Town Clerk of their absence.*

*Moderator Newsome read the resignation letter of Rep. Watrous and thanked her for her service.*

*Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher stated that at the caucus held this evening by the representatives of the 1st District, John Espada was elected to replace Lori Watrous.*

**F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER**

**1. Financial report**

*Town Manager John Burt reported that the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2017 was approximately \$10.8 million which is 9.1% of the FYE 2018 General Fund Adopted Budget. Final numbers for FYE 2017 will be available once all year end journal entries have been posted. He reported that the General Contingency budget for FYE 2018 was appropriated at \$650,000. He reported that the Capital Reserve Fund balance as of August 31, 2017 is estimated at \$836,786 (unaudited).*

**2. Monthly briefing**

*Town Manager John Burt highlighted items from the Town Manager's Monthly News report. He mentioned that he attended a meeting in Hartford with Governor Malloy. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner, Chairman Watson, Mayor Flax and City Mayor Hedrick were also in attendance to express concern about the proposed cut in State aid to Groton. He mentioned that he had a meeting with representatives of Electric Boat last week. He stated that he has a meeting with representatives of Pfizer scheduled for next week to see how Groton can assist with any development they may have planned. He noted that he plans to reach out to as many companies as possible.*

*Responding to Rep. Neugent, Town Manager John Burt stated that the process for adjustments once the budget is passed will depend on the amount we receive. If we receive less, the Town Council will have to look at options for reductions. If we receive more than anticipated, any amount over a \$10,000 increase adjustment would have to be approved by the RTM.*

*Moderator Newsome believes that the Town Council has a priority list for additional spending should Groton receive more revenue than anticipated.*

*Town Manager John Burt stated that the list would include an updated Police Radio Communication Systems.*

*Responding to Rep. Massett, Town Manager John Burt stated that the new four year agreement with the Noank Community Garden includes recreational use. He stated that Groton is responsible for water and mowing.*

*Responding to Rep. Casper, Town Manager John Burt stated that the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is hosting the Fly In at the Groton/New London Airport and that it is an important event.*

*Responding to Moderator Newsome, Town Manager John Burt stated that the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association will be hosting the Fly In at the Groton/New London Airport on October 6th and 7th. He stated that there will be approximately 600 aircraft, a number of seminars, training sessions, aircraft vendors and many manufacturers. He noted that many activities and events in and around Groton are advertised on the AOPA website.*

*Rep. Obrey mentioned that the Groton Fall Festival is that same weekend and that a free shuttle to events will be available to Downtown Mystic, Mystic Seaport and the Nautilus Museum.*

*Rep. Neugent mentioned that the Town Council is having a public hearing on the Charter Revision proposals on Tuesday October 3, 2017*

**G. REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*The report was included in the Town Manager's News.*

**H. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

*Superintendent of Schools Dr. Michael Graner reported that as a result of the \$2.8 million reduction to the FY18 budget, the school district closed Pleasant Valley Elementary School and eliminated 18 teaching positions, as well as the position of principal, school secretary and two custodians positions. These reductions will permanently reduce the district staffing plan. He stated that the Town's Permanent School Building Committee has selected the architectural firm of Silver Petrucelli to design the consolidated middle school. The next step in the process will be to select a construction manager for the project. Once the state budget is approved, the bonding commission will take action on the various school construction projects throughout the state. He noted that two portable classrooms that were formerly at Pleasant Valley Elementary School have been moved to Charles Barnum School. These classrooms will help alleviate some of the overcrowding that resulted from the closure of Pleasant Valley. He reported that the school district was awarded a \$1.25 million grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity to fund a five-year math improvement program. Embedded professional development will be provided to K-12 teachers and tutors will be hired to support student learning. This is the second DoDEA grant that the school district has received in three years. GPS is in year three of a \$1 million DoDEA Literacy Grant. He stated that Fitch High School was notified in late August that the music program had been selected to perform in the 2019 New Year's Day celebrations in London, England. The band is one of only three in America that has been selected to march in the New Year's Day parade and the chorus and orchestra have been invited to perform as part of the celebration. He mentioned that classes began on August 31 for students and the first two weeks had gone extremely well. He stated that there is concern that there may be large class sizes in some of the elementary schools due to the closure to Pleasant Valley. He reported that the meeting with Governor Malloy on September 5, 2017 included himself, Mayor Flax, City Mayor Hedrick, Town Manager John Burt and Board of Education Chair Kim Watson. He stated that having all five Town Officials speak with one voice on behalf of Groton was a strong show of unity.*

*Responding to numerous questions from Rep. Cini, Dr. Graner stated that the special needs population is approximately 13%. He stated that if full bonding was not received to the new middle school, some projects would be reduced in square footage, such as the auditorium, to reduce costs. He noted that there is no legal limit to class size, but that a maximum of 25 students is desired. He reported that the new middle school will accommodate 900 students.*

*Moderator Newsome made a motion to Suspend the Rules to allow State Representative Christine Conley to address the RTM, seconded by Rep. Bailey and so voted unanimously.*

*State Representative Christine Conley reported that the negotiations are stalled for the State budget. She stated that she has attended numerous meetings to discuss why Groton deserves their fair share of funding. She noted that limited funds were available and the final numbers were being put together. She stated that the current budget for Groton is looking okay and she stated that 90% funding is better than 50% or 0% funding. She reported that the House is hoping to vote tomorrow morning and the Senate tomorrow afternoon. She stated that the current budget on the table contains no major revenue changes.*

*Responding to Rep. Bailey, State Representative Conley stated that this is a two year budget and it is re-opened every quarter for adjustments if needed.*

*Responding to Moderator Newsome, State Representative Conley stated that the total municipal aid received from the State includes several different funds and that the Education Cost Sharing Fund is the largest.*

*Town Manager John Burt stated that the Governor's budget currently has a \$1.9 million cut in Education Cost Funding to various towns.*

*Moderator Newsome thanked State Representative Conley for her report and for her service to Groton.*

**I. LIAISON REPORTS**

*No reports.*

**J. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. FINANCE - Chairman Nault**

*No meeting, no report.*

**2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Obrey**

*No meeting, no report.*

**3. EDUCATION - Chairman Neugent**

*No meeting, no report.*

**4. RECREATION - Chairman Wilson**

*No meeting, no report.*

**5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman McDermott**

*No meeting, no report.*

**6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Deane-Shinbrot**

*No meeting, no report.*

**7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Massett**

*Chairman Massett read the minutes of the meeting held on September 13, 2017. The minutes are on file in the Town Clerk's Office. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and make a recommendation on RTM Referral dated August 9, 2017 Review of RTM Rules, Section 8 Discussions, Debate and Voting, specifically Rule 8.1 Personal Interest/Conflict of Interest.*

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Moderator Newsome, seconded by Rep. Powers and so voted unanimously.*

*Due to the fact there was not a quorum at this meeting, this referral will be placed on the agenda for the next RTM regular meeting on October 11, 2017 for discussion. Any vote to amend the present rules will require a 2/3 vote in favor of the amendments.*

**RTM Referral**

**K. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS**

*Rep. Pasqualini suggested that there should be a discussion on each line item from the previous year to substantiate any increase or decrease in it.*

*Town Manager John Burt stated that it is something that is currently being discussed with Finance Director Cindy Landry.*

*Moderator Newsome referred the matter to the Finance Committee.*

**L. OTHER BUSINESS**

*None.*

**M. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion to adjourn was made by Rep. Kent, seconded by Rep. Frickman and so voted unanimously. The Moderator adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.*

*Attest:*

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk  
Clerk of the RTM*

*Michael Thorpe, Town Clerk Office Assistant II*